Novacon 40

Progress Report 2

Novacon 40

12-14 November 2010
The Park Inn, Nottingham

Guest of Honour: **Iain M Banks**

Special Guest: **Brian W Aldiss**

Membership rates

Adults £40, 13-16 yrs £10; 12 and under free (age at 12/11/10). Day rates will be available.

Hotel Rooms

Double or twin rooms will cost £41 pppn, while singles will be £57 pppn. Children: under 5 years free. 5-14 years £5. Over 14 years adult rate.

Availability of singles is not expected to be a problem but we recommend booking early to make sure. Deposits are <u>not</u> required when booking. A booking form is enclosed - you know what to do…

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The Chairman's Second Bit

Vernon Brown

Welcome to Novacon 40's Progress Report Two, in which you will find information about what the Committee is doing, has been doing and is considering doing, plus pleas for Gophers, ideas, membership monies, artefacts and many other things. The problem is that it's the other committee members who write reams about what they are doing, if I steal their thunder by writing about it first who knows what fiendish revenges might stalk me. All organisations are the same; the Chairman has to give witty and informative reports without saying anything that someone else will say. However, here goes!

Overall, things are looking good on all fronts. Memberships are well up to the numbers expected for this time and a fair number of people have booked their hotel rooms already, but, as they say, *tempus fugit* so if you haven't booked yours now's the time to do it. And if you haven't got round to joining yet don't forget that the price goes up as the date approaches.

A minor problem that several people had last year was a dearth of coat hangers. Research carried out jointly by the committee and the hotel staff has determined the cause to be a lack of breeding space. As you know, under normal circumstances coat hangers are very gregarious and love to congregate in tangled bundles on the floor of dark closets where mating takes place and from which they, and their progeny, may be extracted for use. Occasionally a solitary hanger may be found in the middle of a room but this is unusual because, of course, the gene causing such behaviour is lost to the gene pool. Apparently, during recent renovations, many traditional wardrobes were replaced by open ones which, being exposed to the light, meant that the hangers had nowhere to breed and natural wastage soon meant their virtual extinction. However a captive breeding programme has been initiated which means that by November

full numbers will have been restored and will be maintained thereafter.

As I said in PR1 Novacon 40 is a special con so we hope to have a couple of specific-to-Novacon items on the Programme. One of these will be an interactive audience/panel discussion of some type where we will try to come up with a list of forty objects or events that define science fiction and fandom. Without becoming bogged down in definitions of SF, I suppose the first of these would be the story generally accepted to be the first of the genre but it will be interesting to determine the other thirty-nine because, while there are a few no-doubt–about-it items that must be included, there is a far larger group of equal between themselves contenders for the other places. So think about it: what should be included, and why?

Now for a message from the Department of the Bleeding Obvious.

We cannot have a Novacon without you. We need your membership to enable us to plan the best programme we can. We also need volunteers to help us keep the convention running during the weekend. If you want to help please contact us.

We'll also be in a much better position to negotiate with the hotel over food and drink if you book your rooms early - and remember there's **no deposit required** this year.

Eulogy for Harrison

Brian W. Aldiss

I never really thought about it before but I really like Harry. You all know he's good company. And it's all been so long.

It must have started in the fifties (that's last century). I had quarrelled with my wife. Heathrow had not then been invented. So a gang of us drove out to Bushey in a double-decker bus to greet our American visitors. The first worldcon was to be held outside the US – as was the friendship with Harry.

The Americans must have thought they were back in the Stone Age. Bushey was just a cluster of Nissan huts, as was Buckingham Palace. Harry arrived with his wife Joan (who had been in the "Pyjama Game") and their little son Tod, who could actually be seen in pyjamas. And what eccentric and absolutely typical thing had Harry done? He had sold "Deathworld" to John W. Campbell and taken the dibs straight down to the nearest tourist office for tickets to England.

During the con, most of us stayed in the Julius Caesar Hotel (which gives you a clue as to when it was built). There we enjoyed such entertainments as seeing Forest Ackerman, alias 'Forry', guess with amazing accuracy in what month and magazine was Ortis Adelbert Klein's "Valley of Echoes" published. Later on, you could find such vital matters for yourself in a huge William Contendo volume. What admirable work! And I bet he was paid precious little.

Most admirable is the way we have all in our time worked for love of SF and not cash. Harry had a tough time of it and lived over an Indian restaurant. When I got a Hugo for "Hothouse", I was living in one room in an Oxford slum. Harry didn't mind. Do you imagine I am being paid one cent for writing this euology? No way. [Harry will settle with me afterwards.]

Harry and I used to go to all the cons in those days. In Harrogate – in defiance of Brian Burgess – we invented the Thrown Meat Pie. It instantly became a tradition ('caught on', you might say). We got more for a Harrogate meat pie than we did from Ted Carnell for a 9,000 word story in 'New Worlds'.

It was not all fun. In Yarmouth we taught Charles Platt the finer points of literacy criticism by shutting him in a wardrobe which we then – don't ask! – put face down on the floor. Harry danced on the back of the wardrobe. I think he danced the bossa nova, but can't be sure. Charles would probably remember.

Continuing this line of thought, we then launched 'SF Horizons' about which Tom Shippey was recently superior in the pages of the TLS (as we call Pete Weston's "Prolapse")

On, on to greatness! It was Harry's idea; an annual series called "Best SF". The perfect arrangement. Harry would choose the stories, Harry would write the intros to them, Harry would argue with the editor. I just did an Afterword.

Margaret and I used to go over to Denmark, where the Harrisons then lived. I can't think how much torskerone they made us eat.

Harry held cons in Belfast. We celebrated in Yugoslavia before it went down the tubes. We swam in a sewer there. Wonderful country, lacking only in torskerone, but delectable black olives by the thousand.

So time went on in its usual notorious way; Alison was with me at the con in Glasgow, Harry was there with Moira, his daughter. Alison adored them of course. But we won't go into all that.

I ought to say in conclusion that Harry was a great pal and wrote some great books. And was even made President of the Brum SF Group along with one of his dedicated chums.

The Programme

Dave Hicks

Lost and *Ashes to Ashes* have concluded with (speaking personally) dubious explanations for all those myriad plotlines, bizarre experiences, anachronisms and large men drinking whisky. What you may not have realised was that Novacon, too, has been building to a dramatic climax that will reveal THE TRUTH behind decades of myriad plotlines, bizarre experiences, anachronisms and large men drinking real ale. Have the last forty years been a dream? Is the convention hotel in fact an artificial reality environment programmed by super beings from Tralfamadore? Why have several Nova winners disappeared? The revelations will drive you screaming to the bar…

In 1971 keen inventors gave the world its first floppy disk (thanks to – really – someone called Alan Shugart) and its first karaoke machine. This year we have an artificial living cell created for the first time. Is it time to reread *Blood Music* or *The Child Garden*? What might happen next? The 'science' in science fiction is often astronomy or physics - does biology get as much of a look-in as it deserves?

Currently on Radio 4 you can hear *A History of the World in 100 objects*, which set our chairman thinking. What are the 40 objects and events that define science fiction and fandom? Are there any that are special to you? From a Nova award to a dog-eared map of the Birmingham one-way system, from your iPhone to an old Gestetner in the shed (and there's more still around than you may imagine), from a book or painting you bought at your first Novacon to an indescribable rubber novelty purchased at a fan fund auction, is there something that says "Novacon" to you? Or which marks the day you started to think of yourself as a science fiction fan?

These and more thoughts pour through what we'll kindly call our minds as we begin to get a grip on the programme. There'll be Iain M Banks, Brain Aldiss and hopefully other familiar faces and, of course, the con-runner's finest talent pool, *you*.

So don't be shy. If there's something you'd like to see, talk about - or demonstrate with the aid of a charming assistant - that would make your weekend more interesting, entertaining or memorable, get in touch.

The Magnificent Six

Continuing with the memories from the six people who have been to all Novacons, this time we have contributions from Rog and ½r

1971 – That Was *the* Year

Rog Peyton

1971 was a landmark year in my life. Four major things happened that year that collectively changed my life. Peter Weston, Vernon Brown, Bob Rickard and I were the committee of the Eastercon in Worcester that year. Three months later in June, Peter, Vernon and I reformed the Birmingham SF Group from the ashes of the old BSFG I had started 10 years earlier but had fizzled out in 1967. In August, I changed the name of the bookselling business I'd run from home for 18 months, from 'Roger G Peyton (Books)' to 'Andromeda Bookshop' and opened our first shop in Old Hill, a few miles outside Birmingham. And the fourth was going to Novacon – a supposedly one-off convention organised by Vernon and the Aston University SF group.

Unfortunately, nothing about that very first Novacon stands out – perhaps because it was only a 24 hour affair and I didn't stay overnight at the hotel. And it was a very long time ago!

I remember little about any of the four Novacons at the Old Imperial Hotel but two incidents do stand out clearly. At Novacon 3, I was in the tiny little upstairs bar on the Friday evening about to get a drink when Jack Cohen arrived with a sack hanging from his hand. He offered to buy me a drink and asked me to hold my hands out, palms up, in front of me. Which I dutifully did – you don't argue with Jack. He deposited the sack with its very heavy contents onto my hands and told me,

very firmly, to make sure I did not drop it, and turned away to order the drinks. Imagine my surprise when the contents of the bag started moving! Returning with the drinks and a huge mischievous grin across his face, he then took charge of the sack, dipped his hand in and pulled out an eight-foot python and draped it around my shoulders and neck. Anyone wanting a drink at that time was lucky – they didn't have to queue as the bar had emptied very quickly!

The other incident was at Novacon 4. Saturday night was the buffet style banquet and Arline and I were sitting with Harry Harrison. As soon as the food was announced a long queue immediately formed and we decided to let everyone else eat and we would go up last: which we did, only to discover that virtually all the food was gone – and no staff to be seen. Going to the kitchen to ask if there was any more food coming out, I discovered the staff going through the rubbish bins looking for salad that could be washed and served up again. I kid you not! Arline, Harry and I quickly decided that a trip to a local curry house was in order. The next day, over 60 people reported food poisoning and we learned that the hotel manager had fired the chef on the Friday, the day that the convention had started. The hotel manager then claimed that we'd booked Sunday lunch for 130 people (we hadn't) and angrily told us that he expected us to pay for 130 lunches even though only 3 people entered the restaurant that lunchtime. We countered that the restaurant was empty because everyone was suffering from food poisoning and that we intended to report the hotel. He dropped his claim on the understanding that we didn't report him.

That was understandably the last time Novacon was held at the Imperial. I was chairman of Novacon 5 and after visiting all the Birmingham hotels, took it to the Royal Angus where it stayed for 9 years with just one break. That break was Novacon 8 when Laurence Miller and his committee chose the Holiday Inn in Suffolk Street. Overall a very good convention except that the heated swimming pool and the bar were in the same room! It

made for a very humid atmosphere. Miraculously only a couple of drunken fans fell, fully clothed, into the pool! It could have been much worse.

Novacon 9 was back at the Angus and, again, I was the chairman. Chris Priest was Guest of Honour and his piece for the Programme Book – *The Making of the Lesbian Horse* - was far too long to include as part of the Programme Book. So I had the idea of doing his piece as a separate item, the Novacon Special, making it a limited numbered edition and giving it free to every member. I was chairman of Novacon 10 as well and Brian Aldiss was our GoH. He very kindly let us have a story for a Novacon Special after which it became a Novacon tradition to ask our GoH each year for a story or article. With only a couple of exceptions, there has been a Novacon Special every year since Novacon 9 in 1979.

Because we had Brian as GoH the attendance figures rocketed and after the convention we were told by the hotel manager that we'd had 550 attendees but they'd discovered their insurance only covered them for a maximum of 500! So Novacon 11 was limited to 500 and we had to turn away a dozen or so fans who just turned up at the last minute without booking.

After that, Novacons tended to blur one into another, being so well organised that little went wrong. I can remember very few 'incidents' after that time, whether it was the Angus, the Grand, the De Vere in Coventry, a hotel in Malvern, the Excelsior Hotel out at the airport, etc.

We did have one Novacon (Novacon 26) at the tiny Ibis Hotel in Birmingham city centre. How we ended up there I have no idea. The hotel was way too small to hold a convention like Novacon. The book room was so tiny that potential buyers were let into the room six at a time. Not good for us booksellers. That was also the convention that Dave Holmes bought his pet tarantula along – in a glass 'cage' which he had in a large bag. In typical

Dave Holmes fashion he got drunk (absolutely no surprise there) and went home on the Sunday night leaving the bag in one of the function rooms. I can only imagine the look on the face of the poor cleaner, coming into work early on the Monday morning, seeing a bag left by a resident, opening the bag and being confronted by one very large, very hungry, agitated tarantula. I believe the hotel had to send her home for the rest of the day.

I was at the shop, just around the corner from the hotel on that Monday morning. The phone call I received from the hotel manager was, to say the least, brief. "Get this thing out of here – Now!" So I collected it, took it back to the shop and displayed it on the counter. When I rang Dave he didn't even realise he'd left it!!!

And so to modern Novacons at Walsall and Nottingham: the Walsall ones I will always remember because I was able to go into Walsall to Golden Moments – one of the very best Indian restaurants ever! I still have to research Nottingham but I did find one superb restaurant by accident last year (no, I ain't tellin'!).

Do I remember anything else about Novacons? Well, yes, I sold a hell of a lot of books!

39 Novacons and hopefully I'll make it to number 40. 39 *very* enjoyable conventions thanks to a large number of committee members working their butts off over the years. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. I really do appreciate all the effort and hard work, each and every one of you have made over the years to provide us with a great social gathering. And long may they continue.

Novacon Memories

½r Cruttenden

Richard Standage had always struck me as being a nice enough bloke (granted that I only see him once or twice a year), quiet, unassuming, friendly, capable of amusing people with accounts of very uncomfortable and distinctly intimate physical suffering (see Empties 14) – then he does THIS to me!

Dear ½r

As one of the six people who has been to every Novacon we would really appreciate you input to one of the PRs in the form of a couple of hundred words reminisce or reflection on the last 40 years of fandom, conventions, or Novacon itself (anything really that you would like to write about).

A couple of hundred words – this means 5 words per con. Just what kind of conrep is that? And surely he means "your input" and "words of reminiscence or…"

Oh well, I suppose that I'll have to consult the archives, (which took a day and a half, including a few diversions, and I still haven't found everything, as will become apparent), and Wendy, the archivist, who promptly came up with the following, in no particular order:

Walking into the foyer of the Imperial and finding Wendy's uncle lurking in ambush for us (we were to marry at the end of that month) to take us to his home for a meal, mainly, I suspect, so that Wendy's aunt could see what Wendy had decided to settle down with. I think she did, and still does, approve. We still have the multiply-signed engagement card from that con's (Novacon 4) attendees.

Does anyone else remember the static shocks we got from the Royal Angus's carpet? We do – since Wendy's father was a

personal friend of one of the men who laid it. We had an off cut from it in the bedroom of our caravan. Very hard-wearing, and so much warmer than the lino that it replaced. And few shocks – if you didn't roll on it.

One very cold Novacon, peering down from our room at the back of the Royal Angus, we could see the camper van we'd shared with friends on the trip to the con. We could also see the display at the top of Police HQ –2° C. The van had no heating – and four *very* cold people in it! The kids shared our room on Saturday night.

Well, I suppose I'd better make a start on reminiscence or reflection, so here goes

Novacon. PR1 is foolscap, the flyer is quarto, as are PRs 2 - 4. Younger fans will have to have these paper sizes explained to them. The Programme Book is folded foolscap, and just to confuse things the pocket guide is A4. PR2 announces the founding of Andromeda Books. Room rate £2.75pppn. The con badge says Novacon – 1.

N2. still confused. PRs 1 – 3 quarto, 4 is A4. The Non-programme Book is A5. Programme in separate sheet.

3. announces the setting-up of the Nova Awards. This is the con where "The Wizard of Ozimov" was born, in a room party. Judy Blish remarked that I reminded her of the Cowardly Lion – my hair was much longer then, and ginger. So I went back to my room and, returning in my hairy overcoat, proceeded to roll my *rrrr*s. The rest is recorded in Prolapse.

4. For some reason I don't have the Programme Book for this con – my system has failed, at least partially – but I do have PRs, etc.

5. and a move to the Royal Angus. Novacon News appears – a broadsheet PR1. 272 members listed in the Programme Book. What's happened to the smallish relaxacon I'd come to know and love?

6's con-pack comes in a clear plastic bag, not a "plain brown cover". Room £5.75 pppn single. Why can't I remember Dave Kyle's GoH speeches?

7. GoH John Brunner. Was this the con where he strolled round in punny fancy-dress: dressed normally – for John – carrying a lit candle in its holder? Book. Nobody got it. "Something wicked this way comes". Very good, or bad, at puns was John.

8. The Holiday Inn. Which noted that there would be a lot of unaccompanied males – and arranged for "escorts" to be in attendance. Poor girls! Not a lot of business. Room £11 single. I did NOT do well in the Dragonquiz. Programme Book contains an ad for Novacon 9 West, to be held in Albany, New York State. First Fangorn covers?

9. First appearance of a GoH con booklet. Chris Priest tells about the French translation of "Inverted World". Their title? "Queer World". Well, that pretty well sums up the French for you! I got involved in the phone chat with Novacon 9 West, that Jan Howard Finder was running in Albany, thus having my voice present at two cons, several thousand miles apart, simultaneously. Later, I got hold of one of the £1 notes, overprinted Novacon 9 West, they were using in the bar at the Turf Inn.

10. 495 members. Brian Aldiss as GoH. Room £12 pppn single. The con has got too big. Even if you live in the bar you don't see everyone you want to.

Brum Group's 10th Birthday Party. Wonder who bought the R2 D2 soap in the auction? Some splendidly silly stuff in the Souvenir Book.

11. Bosh is GoH. Was this his first Serious Scientific Talk? Why don't I have PR2, or "Courageous New Planet"? though the latter may be in my Bosh collection. Must try and find that.

12. No Programme Book. Did I lose it? GoH Harry Harrison. Steve Green said it was the worst con ever. Was he at either the London Eastercon at the Royal Hotel or the Mancon at Owens Park, the Uni halls of residence?

13. Summer PR – The Disaster Special – lots of fun to re-read various people's biggest disasters. Plus, of course, the back cover illo of one.

14. and we move to the Grand Hotel. Perry Rodent covers on the PRs. First beer tasting, on Saturday night. For some reason I was number 140, not 28, which I try to keep as an easy way to remember my con number. Re-appearance of the GoH book, after a two year gap.

15. Back to 28, and we're off to Coventry and the De Vere. Room £20 pppn single. GoH's (Langford and White) Book done as an Ace Double. Wendy and I decided to go for a meal in the hotel's Three Spires restaurant. The maitre d' wasn't keen – I was wearing a white t-shirt and embroidered trousers. Then Eddie Jones, who had eaten there every evening, offered to draw dj, bow tie, etc., on the shirt. This resolved the problem. We ate there. Wish Eddie had done the drawing, would have been fun to embroider that! And there's a flyer for the Brum Group's 15th Birthday Party. AND I got my NAFF Certificate in recognition of 15 years attendance. Wendy has now pointed out that she believes that the meal was during an Eastercon. A check of con attendees did not find Eddie listed, so she is almost certainly right.

Brum Group 15th and another Bosh talk. No Brian or Harry in the Special, but the history continues. Well worth a re-read.

16. De Vere again, with Ted Tubb GoH. Splendid interview with him by Vinc Clarke in the Programme Book. Another Ace Double Special for him and Chris Evans. And some lovely Alan Hunter illoes in PRs 1 & 3 and the Programme Book. Friday programme item: Shaw and Pratchett "Who wants to live in a world I made?" Something else I don't remember. Was it taped?

17. Stan Eling is Number 28. Back at the Royal Angus and the bar has doubled in size. Ian (M) Banks gets very thorough coverage in the Programme Book and the GCSE is born. I've managed distinctions once or twice. Launch of Critical Wave.

18. Appearance of the plastic carrier bag for con bumph. Lost the Programme Book again, but am 28 once more. PRs 1 & 2 have Fangorn covers – why is that boy trying to inflate a frog? Later – found Programme Book and Special – filed in 20. Why?

19. Excelsior Hotel at the airport. Flyer for the Novacon Fanzine. Not ready for 19, but promised RSN. So where's my copy?

20. Back to the plain brown wrapper. Excelsior £22 pppn twin. Jack Cohen is GoH. I don't have the Special. Was there one? Also The Novacon Fanzine was supposed to be in the con pack, and I can't find mine. Missed "The Princess Bride". Managed to completely nonplus Brian Ameringen last year (2009) on confessing that I'd never heard of it until it was quoted in one of John Ringo's books. Have now read it. Fun. Must get tape or DVD.

BSFG 20th. Twentycon at the Holiday Inn. No ladies of negotiable virtue this time. Bernie Evans is 28, I'm 42. Not a bad number to have, really. This was probably not the birthday

party at which someone said, in a room party, at about 1am, “I fancy going out for a meal”. “Don’t be silly, look at the time”. Then Ray Bradbury – I think – said that he knew of a nearby Greek restaurant that would be open for hours yet. So he phoned and booked and 6 or so of us, including – again I think – Bosh, went. One thing I’m quite definite about is that at one point, on glancing behind me, I saw a high heel, body attached, sail past my nose in the arms of an inebriated Greek! We walked back through the dawn to the hotel. I understand that the Group lost about £1000 on this party/con. Probably why it that was the last.

21. Those who’ve been to all 20 get in free. Hotel name change to Forte Post House. Only PR3 is numbered. Find a copy of the Programme Book and turn to p21. Whee! Gem!! In fact the whole of the book is worth a re-read.

22. Back to ~~the Future~~ Royal Angus. This is the one where I got more lumbered than usual, in that Carol Morton persuaded me to moderate the panel on “Writing as a collaborator” with “Jonathan Wylie” – Mark and Julia Smith – Bosh and Dave Hardy. Managed to talk to both pairs beforehand and thus had a selection of questions for them. The panel went well – I think – the audience adding queries of their own. Also on the programme, and much more important, was the panel with Bosh, Iain Banks and Tom Holt, discussing humour, and why was it much more prevalent in fantasy rather than sf.

23. Shared a triple room with Roger Robinson and Andy Sawyer. Surprisingly, both of them still talk to me. The “Not the Bob Shaw Talk” was given by Al Johnston as Bosh was unwell and therefore could not attend.

24. All I’ve found so far is copies of the hotel booking form, which doesn’t name the hotel, and the Balti Banquet and Beer & Sausage Tasting, which does. The Angus.

25's not much better! The Chamberlain Hotel. £20 pppn sharing. Have PR1, the hotel's booking confirmation and a note from Carol telling me that I'd joined twice. A fan got mugged outside this former flophouse

26. The Ibis Hotel. David Gemmell is GoH. And that's all I can tell you, since no con bumph has surfaced yet.

27. The Abbey Hotel, Malvern. GoH Peter F. Hamilton. Got rear-ended on a very slippery slip-road coming off the M5, Shoving my car into the back of the one in front, breaking both headlight clusters. Got a replacement "pair" Saturday morning, fitted the offside one and found nearside one wasn't – they'd sold me two offside side in a pair box. By this time the dealer had closed, so I bodged up the old nearside one. Lost a cuff-link from a presentation set during all this. Irreplaceable. Apart from that a good con. "Desert Island Books" is a good idea – not repeated often enough. Where's PR1?

28. Back to Brum again. Britannia Hotel, New St. GoH Paul McAulay. Two *Read Me*, Inside and Outside. Getting to the hotel was interesting, the access route was closed. "TAFF must die". Sorry, Julian, but it didn't.

29. Back to a plain brown cover, the Britannia and that closed road. Ian Stewart was the GoH. PR1 has his "What I did in my Christmas Holidays" – The Royal Institution Xmas Lectures, that's what! The Programme Book has a really interesting article by him on how he, Jack Cohen and Terry Pratchett collaborate when book writing. Followed by Jack's equally good article introducing Ian, insofar as that is necessary.

30. Chris Priest. Britannia. £42.50 pppn single. PR4 has Maureen Kincaid Speller on Things to do at Novacon on a Friday, but that she doesn't say anything about getting to the hotel by car, and yes – there ARE still problems. No less than

three articles introducing Special Guest Rog Peyton, all warning readers to get stronger wallet locks!!

31. Welcome to Walsall's Quality Hotel. Gwyneth Jones is the GoH. Good profile of her by MKS in the Programme Book. Why a white envelope this time?

32. GoH Ian McDonald. Quality Hotel. Special Guest Prof. Kevin Warwick. First appearance of the DCM's weskit? See page 14 of the Special for the sex scene.

33. OK- until we move from the Quality Hotel I won't note the venue again. Jon Courtenay Grimwood, with another of Maureen's excellent intros to him in the Programme Book. No GCSE?

34. Ian Watson as GoH. A short appreciation of him by Dave Hicks covers eight pages and is described as cursory. I'd say thorough and interesting. Again no GCSE. I've found a Groat. Damn! That means a pint missed.

35. Alastair Reynolds. £47 pppn single. "I want my kids to read SF". Wonder if "The Princess Bride" appeared in the resultant list? Double tragedy, two Groats unused! GCSE is back. Why have I got a small button badge – 10, with a bust of a dragon in the nought?

36. Ken MacLeod. Why is a Netgear CD and the Installation Guide for same plus a letter from the Hornby Railway Collectors' Association in the goodie pack? Apart from the aforementioned and the usual con bumph mine also contains copies of Fortean Times, the Fortean Times Book of Medical Mayhem, The Write Fantastic, the Plokta Christmas Catalogue, Ansible 232, Visionary Tongue fanzine and Orbital's PR1. Question – did I see anything of the con, or stay in my room to read all this lot? If so, judging from the Programme Book, I missed some interesting stuff. No Groats, thank Ghod.

37. and Charles Stross is GoH. A much slimmer goodie bag. I'm sure I got to Bug's TAFF slide show and to Charles' speech. The PRs and Programme Book have a good potted history of British cons by several hands.

38. Ian R. MacLeod. Only 177 members?

39. and we move to the Park Inn, Nottingham. GoH is Justina Robson. Got lost trying to find the hotel, the A6130 is not signposted, and in the dark I didn't see the street name. Ended up in the city centre one-way system twice (finally got to the hotel by following a bus) and then a third time during the pub crawl – but that at least that was on foot. "Good Book Hour". Talk about your favourite book for three minutes. *Three minutes?* "Wasp" needs a lot more than that - as does one of Charles'. And I've found three Groats!!

40. Park Inn. Iain M. Banks, well known author of "Raw Spirit" detailing his tour round all the malt whisky distilleries of Scotland, The only book that I got signed at the second Glasgow Worldcon. This is Iain's second time as GoH. See N17. Special Guest Brian WAldiss. PR1 has the first two reminiscences from the Magnificent Six. Since I can't find the hotel booking form I assume it's been sent off.

Unrealised ambition: Who remembers "OTT" hosted by Chris Tarrant? Always ended in near chaos. It was recorded in Brum on a Satyrday (interesting typo, that). I proposed that Novacon get tickets and we attend in masquerade costumes, since the recording would be before – or after – that programme item. One of next year's committee thought this was a good idea – obviously enough, we were in the bar – but it didn't happen. They took OTT off the air. If I was paranoid I'd wonder if they'd heard.

The Nova Awards

Steve Green

In 1973, Novacon instituted the annual Nova Awards to celebrate achievement in British science fiction fanzines. Originally handed down by a panel of judges, these accolades are currently decided by Novacon members who can demonstrate a basic knowledge of current fanzines. Following Novacon 32, the three categories - best fanzine, best fanzine writer, best fanzine artist - were extended to cover fanzines produced in Eire. In addition, electronic fanzines are now eligible, provided a copy is lodged with the current administrator, Martin Tudor.

The following fanzines have been received by or brought to the notice of the Nova Awards administrator since 30 September 2009 and are considered eligible for the 2010 awards, presented at Novacon 40:

An Fleghes Hager-Na Yu Canjeo, Doug Bell; *Ansible*, Dave Langford; *Banana Wings*, Claire Brialey & Mark Plummer; *Brum Group News*, Rog Peyton (for the Birmingham Science Fiction Group); *Data Dump*, Steve Sneyd; *The Doppelganger Broadsheet*, Colin Langeveld; *The Fortnightly Fix*, Steve Green; *Griff*, Ian Milstead; *Inca*, Rob Jackson; *iShoes*, Yvonne Rowse; *Journey Planet*, James Bacon & Claire Brialey & Chris Garcia; *Relapse*, Peter Weston. Contact details and the full Nova Award rules are available at the Novacon website.

Miscellany

Art Show
Serena Culfeather has agreed to run this again after her excellent work last year. Artists looking to exhibit work (for auction or otherwise) should get in touch soon.

Dealers' Room
As last year this will be large and right next to the bar! Interested dealers should contact Tony Berry at morbius@altair-4.co.uk

Nova awards
A tradition of Novacon for more than 30 years, the Nova Awards will be presented for outstanding achievement by fan editor, writer and artist, as voted for by the membership of the convention.

Parents' co-op
Novacon will not be operating a crèche but we will look into setting up a parents' co-op, where a room is set aside for smaller children to play under parental supervision if there is sufficient demand. If you're interested let us know as soon as possible.

Food and drink
As last year we expect to provide real ale and a good cider plus a range of affordable snacks and meals throughout the weekend.

Memorabilia
Do you have any photos or other memories from the last 40 years of Novacon that we could put on display? Please contact Vernon Brown at vcbrown@btinternet.com if you can help.

Members

As at June 2010

Iain M Banks
Brian Aldiss
Harry Harrison
Justina Robson
Ian R MacLeod
Vernon Brown
Tony Berry
Helena Bowles
Dave Hicks
Cat Coast
Alice Lawson
Steve Lawson
Richard Standage
Martin Tudor
Pat Brown
Tim Stannard
Dave Cox
Chris Morgan
Pauline Morgan
Margaret Austin
Martin Easterbrook
Dave Hardy
Chris O'Shea
Campbell McLeay
Lisa Konrad
Neil Summerfield
Chris Bell
½r
Michael Davidson
Christine Davidson
Claire Brialey
Mark Plummer
Harpal Singh
Dave Tompkins
Marcus Rowland
Sue Jones
Linda Ternent
George Ternent
Calvin Ternent
Roger Robinson
Chris Stocks
Stephen Dunn
Thomas Recktenwald
Wilf James
Neil Tomkinson
Alison Tomkinson
Dave Langford
Barbara-Jane
Markus Thierstein
David Cluett
Joyce Cluett
Julian Headlong
Greg Pickersgill
Catherine Pickersgill
Tony Rogers
James Odell
Caroline Loveridge
Gavin Long
Tobes Valois
Adrian Snowdon
Niall Gordon
Harry Payne
Jodie Payne
Hal Payne
Omega
Peter Mabey

Susie Haynes
Brian Ameringen
Meriol Ameringen
Caroline Mullan
Gerry Webb
Mali Perera
Penny Hicks
David Thomas
Margaret Croad
Jamie Scott
Lennart Uhlin
Gwen Funnell
Peter Wareham
Carol Morton
Tony Morton
Paul Dormer
Ron Gemmell
John Medany
Rita Medany
Anne Woodford
Alan Woodford
Steve Rogerson
Mike Scott
Flick
Jim Walker
David Cochrane
John Harvey
Eve Harvey
Steve Davies
Giulia deCesare
Laura Wheatly
Michael Meara
Pat Meara
Tony Ellis
Emma Pagano
Julia Daly
Douglas Spencer

David Redd
David Haddock
Geoffrey Winterman
Dave Lally
Martin Hoare
Al Johnston
Tim Maguire
Clarrie O'Callaghan
Steve Green
Rog Peyton
Robert Smith
Vincent Docherty
Angela Rosin
Sue Edwards
David Carlile
Michael Bernardi
Doug Bell
Christina Lake
Ann Looker
Susan Peak
Michael Abbott
Anne Wilson
Justin Williams
Austin Benson
Caroline Wilson
Christopher Priest
Leigh Kennedy
Del Cotter
Simon Dearn
Kate Solomon
Malcolm Davies
Nick Mills
Ken MacLeod
Tim Kirk
Bridget Wilkinson
Peter Wilkinson
E.D. Buckley

Yvonne Rowse	John Bilton
Ian Sorensen	Randy Byers
Sally Rowse	John Stewart
Ina Shorrock	Barbara Stewart
Gavin Shorrock	Jon Courtenay Grimwood
Nigel Furlong	Stephen Baxter
Sabine Furlong	Geoff Ryman
Karen Furlong	Jack Cohen
Simon Furlong	Graham Joyce

Don’t forget to book early and keep an eye on our website for the latest news.

www.novacon.org.uk

Acknowledgements

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Thanks also to Steve Green and Kevin Clarke for running the Novacon website.

Novacon is organised under the auspices of the Birmingham Science Fiction Group. The BSFG meets on the second Friday of each month at the Briar Rose Hotel, Bennetts Hill, Birmingham City Centre. Membership costs £16 per year which includes a monthly newsletter. For further information, a copy of their newsletter or a membership application form contact their Membership Secretary Vicky Cook on bhamsfgroup@yahoo.co.uk or feel free to go to one of their meetings!

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